

## Message Text

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ACTION EA-09

INFO OCT-01 AS-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02

INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-02 PRS-01 SP-02

SS-15 USIA-15 IO-14 AID-05 COME-00 EB-07 FRB-01

TRSE-00 XMB-04 OPIC-06 LAB-04 EPG-02 SIL-01

OMB-01 ACDA-10 /122 W

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R 080320Z JUL 77

FM AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8049

INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

AMEMBASSY JAKARTA

AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR

AMEMBASSY MANILA

CINCPAC

UNCLAS SINGAPORE 2868

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR, ASEAN

SUBJECT: TENTH ASEAN MINISTERIAL MEETING

REF: SINGAPORE 2846

1. SUMMARY: IN OPENING ADDRESSES BEFORE TENTH ASEAN MINISTERIAL MEETING, ASEAN FMS PRAISED PAST ACHIEVEMENTS AND EXPRESSED HOPES OF EVEN GREATER COOPERATION IN THE FUTURE. (SEE REFTEL ON GOS ADDRESSES.) PHILIPPINES FM ROMULO EMPHASIZED THE NEED TO MAINTAIN OR INCREASE THE MOMENTUM IN ECONOMIC COOPERATION. INDONESIA FM MALIK STRESSED CREATION OF A SPHERE OF PEACE, STABILITY AND PROSPERITY FOR ALL OF SOUTHEAST ASIA, AND ALSO POINTED OUT THE NEED TO REORGANIZE THE ASEAN STRUCTURE TO EXPEDITE DECISION-MAKING. FM UNCLASSIFIED

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RITHAUDDEEN OF MALAYSIA NOTED THAT IN A SETTING OF RAPID DEVELOPMENT ASEAN MUST RESPOND QUICKLY TO ACHIEVE ITS OBJECTIVES. HE ALSO EMPHASIZED THE IMPORTANCE OF DEVELOPING BILATERAL TIES WITH INDOCHINA. FM UPADIT OF THAILAND ADDRESSED THE EXPANDING ACTIVITIES OF ASEAN WITH A WARNING THAT IT WAS THE TASK OF THE MINISTERS TO ASSURE THAT THE

BRANCHES DID NOT LACK A MAIN TRUNK. HE REASSURED OTHER MEMBERS THAT THAILAND IS NOW IN A STRONG POSITION TO MEET THE THREATS POSED TO ITS WAY OF LIFE. END SUMMARY.

2. IN HIS OPENING ADDRESS, FM ROMULO NOTED THAT IN CONTEXT OF WORLDWIDE FEARS AND INSECURITIES, ASEAN MEMBERS HAD MANAGED TO SUSTAIN RELATIVELY HIGH GROWTH RATES, RESULTING IN HIGHER LIVING STANDARDS. ROMULO NOTED ASEAN FACES BOTH INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL PROBLEMS, BUT THE LATTER WERE OF PARTICULAR IMPORTANCE BECAUSE INCREASINGLY ASEAN IS RENDERED HELPLESS BY EVENTS OUTSIDE THE REGION. THIS, HE SAID, IS WHY HEADS OF STATE HAVE EMPHASIZED THE NEED TO MAKE COMMON CAUSE WITH THE THIRD WORLD. ROMULO STRESSED IMPORTANCE OF RELATIONS WITH DEVELOPED COUNTRIES AND IMPROVING RELATIONS WITH INDOCHINA. HE CALLED FOR INCREASE IN NUMBERS OF PRODUCTS ELIGIBLE FOR ASEAN PREFERENTIAL TREATMENT, AGREEMENT ON ADDITIONAL ASEAN INDUSTRIAL PROJECTS, INDUSTRIAL COMPLEMENTATION SCHEMES AND ESTABLISHMENT OF BUFFER STOCKS FOR ASEAN BASIC COMMODITIES.

3. IN OPENING, FM MALIK RECOUNTED THE READINESS OF INDONESIA TO CREATE A SPHERE OF PEACE, STABILITY AND PROSPERITY ENCOMPASSING THE WHOLE OF SOUTHEAST ASIA, UNCLASSIFIED

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ALTHOUGH THIS WOULD INVOLVE COUNTRIES WITH DIFFERENT SYSTEMS OF GOVERNMENT AND EVEN OPPOSING IDEOLOGIES. MALIK STATED THAT THE MOST SIGNIFICANT ASEAN PROGRESS HAD BEEN IN FIELD OF ECONOMIC COOPERATION, CITING THE AGREEMENT ON ASEAN PREFERENTIAL TRADING ARRANGEMENTS (PTA) AND THE APPROVAL LAST WEEK OF 71 ITEMS FOR TARIFF CONCESSIONS UNDER PTA.

4. FINALLY, MALIK TURNED TO THE NEED TO DEVELOP AN EXPEDITIOUS FRAMEWORK FOR ASEAN WHICH WOULD ALLOW IT TO GROW AND DEVELOP, NOTING A NEED FOR REVIEW OF THE PRESENT SYSTEM HAD BEEN AGREED UPON LAST FEBRUARY. SPECIFICALLY HE FELT THAT THE ASEAN SECRETARIAT MUST BE STRENGTHENED AND THAT THE PRESENT AGREEMENT ON THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE ASEAN SECRETARIAT SHOULD BE REVIEWED.

5. FM RITHAUDDEEN INDICATED ASEAN IS NOT INWARD LOOKING IN PURSUING REGIONALISM, BUT ATTACHES IMPORTANCE TO RELATIONSHIPS WITH OTHER COUNTRIES AND OTHER REGIONAL INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS, NOTING EXISTING COOPERATION WITH AUSTRALIA, NEW ZEALAND,

JAPAN, CANADA AND THE EEC. HE NOTED THE COMMON GOAL OF IMPROVING LIVING CONDITIONS FOR THE PEOPLE WHICH ARE SHARED BY ASEAN AND INDOCHINA, AND EMPHASIZED THE IMPORTANCE OF ESTABLISHING BILATERAL RELATIONS WITH THE INDOCHINESE COUNTRIES IN THE INTEREST OF PEACE AND STABILITY.

6. THE MALAYAN FM ALSO NOTED A NEED FOR CONSOLIDATING THE ORGANIZATIONAL MACHINERY IN ORDER TO COPE WITH EXPANDING FUNCTIONS AND ROLES IN THE ECONOMY, SOCIAL, CULTURAL AND EDUCATIONAL FIELDS.

7. ATTENTION WAS DIRECTED TO RECENT INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCES (UNCTAD NEGOTIATING CONFERENCE ON A UNCLASSIFIED

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COMMON FUND, THE LONDON SUMMIT, THE PARIS CONFERENCE AND THE MEETING OF THE COMMONWEALTH HEADS OF GOVERNMENT) AND TO THE INTENSITY WITH WHICH DEVELOPING NATIONS PURSUED THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A NEW ECONOMIC ORDER. HE EXPRESSED APPRECIATION FOR THE MORE POSITIVE POSITION OF DEVELOPED COUNTRIES IN THESE CONFERENCES, BUT FELT THAT THE DECISIONS AS A WHOLE WERE BELOW EXPECTATIONS. HE ASKED FOR ASEAN SUPPORT FOR THE COMMON FUND FOR IMPLEMENTATION OF THE INTEGRATED PROGRAM FOR COMMODITIES AND AS A SOURCE OF FINANCE FOR BUFFER STOCK OPERATIONS.

8. THAI FM UPADIT NOTED THE PACE OF ASEAN COOPERATION HAD INTENSIFIED IN THE LAST YEAR IN TRADE, COMMUNICATIONS, BANKING, SOCIAL AFFAIRS, INDUSTRIES AND AGRICULTURE. HE HIGHLIGHTED THE ROLE OF ASEAN ECONOMIC MINISTERS. HOWEVER, HE INDICATED THAT THIS EXPANSION OF ACTIVITIES NECESSITATED A RESTRUCTURING OF THE ORGANIZATIONAL MACHINERY TO COORDINATE AND HARMONIZE THE VARIOUS FIELDS OF COOPERATION.

9. HE MENTIONED RELATIONSHIPS WITH THIRD PARTIES AND PRAISED THE UNITY DISPLAYED BY ASEAN IN THESE CONTACTS. THESE DIALOGUES WERE ALSO SEEN AS INDICATIVE OF THE GROWING RECOGNITION GIVEN TO ASEAN AS A VIABLE AND EFFECTIVE REGIONAL ORGANIZATION IN THE WORLD ARENA.

10. UPADIT THEN TURNED TO DOMESTIC THAI AFFAIRS, NOTING THAT CRISES IN THE LAST YEAR HAD NECESSITATED A CHANGE IN THAI ADMINISTRATION LAST OCTOBER. THE PRESENT GOVERNMENT WAS SAID TO BE "ENDEAVORING TO RE-ROUTE THE THAI PEOPLE ON THE BASIS OF A DEEP UNCLASSIFIED

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COMMON ATTACHMENT TO THE INSTITUTIONS OF NATION,  
RELIGION AND MONARCHY, AND TO LAY FIRMER FOUNDATIONS  
FOR A WORKING PARLIAMENTARY DEMOCRACY TO BE CARRIED  
OUT ON A SPECIFIC TIMETABLE."

11. COMMENT: WHILE THREE FMS EMPHASIZED THE NEED  
FOR CHANGE IN THE ASEAN ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE,  
ONLY THE INDONESIA FM DIRECTLY CRITICIZED THE ASEAN  
SECRETARIAT, WHICH CURRENTLY IS HEADED BY AN INDONESIAN.  
HOLDRIDGE

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